DIG

MAGAZINE

April 2007

The Music Issue!

30 Seconds to Mars
Coachella
The Used
Local Venues
Student Musicians

EDITOR'S LETTER

The April issue of DIG is always the most exciting to create. No matter our staff differences, music is one thing we all have in common. We may not like the same genres—punk and indie are always battling with mainstream here in the office. I lose often but when no one is around Brand New's latest release, "The Devil and God are Raging Inside Me," is on repeat.

DIG has showcased its share of up-coming and underground music artists throughout its issues, but has hardly conquered a platinum-selling band. Matthew sought out for months to get an interview with a member of 30 Seconds To Mars and this month we finally uncover the enigma of the band and why we should stop calling its vocalist Jordan Catalano. (But who am I kidding, I still won't stop.)

Last year, I attended one day of Coachella and could not understand why anyone would spend two days camping out in the heat. Obviously, there are music and art fans more avid than I. I also did not have Brandy's Coachella survival guide on Page 8. Perhaps, if I had a time machine, I would've enjoyed my time in Indio just a little better.

Keep reading,

Angela O'Brien

DIG MAGAZINE

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CORRECTIONS

Despite the fact that countries are very real, I regret to you (actually myself) that I misspelled Israel on the cover of March 2007. Spell check usually is handy. Just remember, we are a learning publication. Now I know how to spell Israel.

Brooks College is now accepting applications for dormitory housing, Spring 07 Semester!

Reserve your space now and save $100 of the $150 non-refundable application fee! (new applicants only)

Brooks College is less than 2 miles from CSULB campus and offers renovated dormitories, Cal State shuttle service, comfortable atmosphere, 24/7 Public Safety!

Call 800-228-7023 *5555 or email: housing2@brookscollege.edu to reserve your spot today!

Practice Makes Perfect

Tucked away in the North end of campus are the determined music majors making sure the beat goes on.

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Photo by Brigid McGuire

30 Seconds to Mars

With rock sensation 30 Seconds To Mars exploding on to the mainstream, here's your chance to read one of the last interviews with Matt Watcher before he left the band.

By Matthew Wilkinson

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Coachella Heats Up

The god of all Indie rock music festivals is sure to leave you thirsty for more, so make sure to check out Brandy's survival guide.

By Brandy Baker

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virtual rockstar

Get your 15 minutes of fame from a video game

Story and photo by Jana Owens

As of recently, the video game industry has begun capitalizing on the younger generations' love for music.

First there was "Dance Dance Revolution," also known as DDR, which is not a game for the unathletic or uncoordinated. Next, Gamecube released the Donkey Kong bongo game, "Jungle Beat." Then, in all its blazing glory came "Guitar Hero."

Just when video game musicians thought it couldn't get any better, PlayStation 2 released a sequel to the game that lets anybody be a rockstar.

But what's the big fuss?

Well, to be honest, I thought the exact same thing until I picked up one of those guitars and actually made a pathetic attempt to play.

The concept of the game is fairly simple. You have a plastic guitar-shaped game control, modeled after a Gibson Flying SG that has five colored buttons on the fake fret board handle—green, yellow, red, blue and orange. After choosing a song from a selection of popular past and present rock hits, the game lays out the guitar notes in a color-coded form on the screen. As the colored buttons go across the screen, you have to "play" the notes as they go by. If you hit all the notes with the correct timing, the song plays flawlessly.

Sounds painless, right?

Well, for those that have never experienced the challenge of "Guitar Hero," it's not as easy as it looks. For the brief few minutes that your song of choice lasts, you are transformed into a guitarist. Just like a real guitarist, if you make a mistake your song is ruined.

I would love to say my version of Wolfmother's "Woman" sounds just like it does on the radio, I had no such luck. As it turns out, my version of the hit sounds more like a screaming banshee than anything else. I may have failed royally at my first attempt, I still had fun.

Even as a bystander, you get really involved in the game. I caught myself cheering for my friends that were playing as if I were at an actual concert.

With "Guitar Hero 2," Xbox 360 has taken a page from Playstation's book and jumped on the "Guitar Hero" bandwagon. If you buy the Xbox version, you actually get ten exclusive tracks that the PS2 version doesn't offer its users.

Whether you're using a PS2 or Xbox console, you'll find few differences in this second version of the video game. Aside from minor mechanical changes, the biggest addition is the new practice mode. Perfect for those that need all the help and practice they can get, the practice mode allows users to focus on specific sections of songs.

After a few more tries and a thorough utilization of the practice mode, I eventually got the hang of the game. My current favorite is The Police hit "Message in a Bottle." I still don't come anywhere near doing the song justice, but at least this time you can tell what I'm playing!

FOUND!

Live Music Venues in Long Beach

Story and Photos by Brigid McGuire

Not all good concerts are in Hollywood or its neighboring Orange County. There are actually quite a few awesome music venues right here in good ole Long Beach.

My personal favorite is Alex's Bar on 2913 Anaheim St. This isn't your typical watering hole, Alex's is a punk rock bar which hosts live music on most nights and offers a new atmosphere if you are looking for something out of the ordinary. The walls are painted a blood red and there is an old-fashioned photo booth in the corner so you can record your drunken nights in case everything might seem hazy the next morning. Let me forewarn you, some shows can get pretty crazy: The Bronx and the Riverboat Gamblers shows are always worth the money and bloodshed.

Alex's is open from 3 p.m. to 2 a.m. Monday through Thursday and noon to 2 a.m. Friday through Sunday. There is no cover charge unless a band is playing, which you can check on their Web site's calendar on alexsbar.com. Sorry, 21 and over only.

Another favorite is The Prospector, located on 2400 Seventh St. on the corner of Seventh Street and Junipero Avenue. This is a smaller bar compared to Alex's but has more character including a restaurant with nightly specials. Great local bands play here, such as ForceField On and Soon. With cheap drink specials and beer by the pitcher, they have something for everyone. This is another venue that is 21 and over only.

These venues may seem dead during the day, but once the sun sets, they are the places to be to catch the latest in Long Beach music.

The calendar of events is at MySpace.com/theprospectorlongbeach and these shows can fill up fast, so arrive early for a good table or place at the bar.

One of the closest venues to the campus is Di Piazzas restaurant and bar located at 5205 Pacific Coast Highway With live music every night and an open sitting area, you can enjoy the music without worrying if the drunk guy next to you is going to spill his beer all over your feet.

When I first moved to Long Beach back in 2003 this was one of the only decent places to hear music and now it has grown to one of the best live music venues in the Long Beach area. Also, with it being so close to campus, the crowd is mostly college-aged so there are no worries about having some creepy, lonely middle-aged drunk bothering you.

Di Piazzas also offers a full menu of Italian food, so you can get your munchies on while watching the live tunes. Check out dipiazzas.com for their full calendar listing.

The Blue Café in downtown Long Beach offers music, food and pool tables. A block from Pine Street, this venue is perfect for those bar-hopping people. This is one of the biggest music venues in Long Beach, with two floors and also two full bars for all of your drinking needs. With a range of musical artists from blues, jazz, rock and punk, there is something different every night. My only warning is watch out where you park, because this is a heavily trafficked area and the Long Beach meter-maids love to give tickets. The Blue Café's calendar is at www.thebluecafe.com/longbeachhomepage.htm.

30 Seconds To Mars isn't just another mouthpiece for actor-turned-rockstar Jared Leto. Former bass player, Matt Wachter, spreads some insight into the mystery that is 30 Seconds To Mars.

Screen to Radio

By Matthew Wilkinson

Photo courtesy of Virgin Records

There is a bad stigma that comes from bands with celebrities in them, and that stigma made Los Angeles-based rock band 30 Seconds To Mars handicapped from the start. While founding member Jared Leto moved to Los Angeles with his older brother Shannon to start a band, it was Jared's newfound acting skills that put a roof over their heads and food on the table.

At 22, Jared earned a regular role in the television teen drama "My So Called Life." The success with his role as Jordan Catalano in that show opened doors to the bigger screen. Jared got cast in "Fight Club," "Requiem for a Dream" and "Panic Room," all before he and Shannon were able to put out their first album.

But Jared refused to silence the musical muse in his head because of his acting successes. He set out to do what he originally came to L.A. for: write music. After two albums and over a million records sold, 30 Seconds To Mars has finally beat that stigma.

The stigma never bothered Matt Wachter. He refused to think of having Jared in the band as an advantage or a disadvantage. Wachter sees Jared as he sees himself, a normal guy. During the day Wachter watches the "Price Is Right," obsesses over the Boston Red Sox and plays PlayStation's "Guitar Hero 2" on the medium-difficulty setting. But at night, this Pottsville, Pa., native transforms into the sleek and skilled bassist of 30 Seconds To Mars, and plays alongside Jared to sold-out arenas all over the world.

The San Diego Gulls locker room smelled like sweat and musk when Wachter and I met to talk. His wife and dog looked on from an adjacent couch as Wachter opened a panel of the bench we were sitting on to reveal hockey equipment. He looked around the room, muttered something about not liking hockey and then looked back at me.

Wachter is tall and skinny, and his blonde head of hair makes him stand out from the dark complexions of his band mates. He has a goofy smile and often cracks jokes before getting to a serious answer.

Watcher spent most of his childhood in New Jersey and Boston but got "tired of the winter and needed a change," so he relocated to L.A. in 2001. He met the Leto brothers through a mutual friend.

"It was surreal," Wachter said of the first meeting between him and Jared. "The only thing I knew him from was 'Requiem for a Dream.' I saw it about two months before I moved to L.A., but on the East Coast you don't get very much interaction with celebrities. It was wild."

At that time, Jared and Shannon had already finished the band's self-titled debut album, which was released in 2002. Jared had written all the songs and sang and played the guitars with Shannon on drums. The brothers wanted to tour, but needed a touring band. Wachter had played bass in some hardcore bands in Jersey and Boston so was happy to get back on the road.

Touring FOR THEM? was fun, but the self-titled album never really caught on. After a year-and-a-half of touring, it had barely sold more than 100,000 copies. The band members didn't give up, though. They started to work on a follow-up, and Wachter found a new challenge. After doing everything on the first album himself, Jared wasn't quick to relinquish any control to him or guitarist Tomo Miličević.

"[It took] patience," Wachter said. "It's like any kind of creative environment; things are always going to be intense. It may be volatile at times, but I think what made it work was just being present. Just being around and willing to help. I had been playing with these guys for a long time, so I think a certain level of trust was established over time."

The band recorded "A Beautiful Lie" over a three-year span in five different countries on four different continents due to a combination of Jared's hectic film schedule and the band members' passion for travel.

"Instead of spending money on some big fancy studio and some crazy gear, we decided to use that money and use it to travel and take a portable studio with us," Wachter

said.

Seeing the world gave the band members a different perspective, and it showed on the album. Instead of the fancy multilayered, panoramic sound of the first album, the follow-up was a simpler and more personal record. Lyrics filled with love, pain, passion, life and death humanized Jared and brought him out from behind the barrier of metaphors he had created on the first album.

"Jared is a very hard-working person," Wachter said. "I've never met anybody who's as committed as he is to anything. Anything he does is 100 percent, whether it's acting or music. He's making 25 bucks a day on the road, when he could be making a lot more."

Jared proved his utter devotion to the band in 2005 when he turned down Academy Award-winning director Clint Eastwood for a key role in the film "Flags of Our Fathers." 30 Seconds To Mars had just landed an opening slot on tour with The Used and Glassjaw, and Jared was unwilling to cancel, even though he cited Eastwood as one of his favorite directors.

"A Beautiful Lie" came out in August 2005, and debuted to average reviews. It gained little acclaim until almost a year later when the single "The Kill" hit radio stations and MTV. Sporting a polished sound, strong chorus and an intriguing "The Shining"-inspired music video that Jared directed himself, the single skyrocketed to No. 3 on the Billboard Modern Rock charts and showed the band was a force to be reckoned with.

Riding that success, the band toured relentlessly and headlined a summer tour, played a stint on the Vans Warped Tour, The Bamboozle festivals on both coasts, headlined the MTV "Welcome to the Universe" tour, played a couple of radio Christmas shows and most recently embarked on the nationwide Taste of Chaos tour. It was this work ethic that helped "A Beautiful Lie" sell over a million copies and get certified platinum.

The album is cohesive, but no two songs sound alike. From "Attack" to "The Fantasy" to the Bjork-written "Hunter," the album treads genres and never commits to one sound.

"I don't know what genre we fall in to," Wachter said. "I've heard people call us nu-metal before, which is just downright offensive. It's a result of all of us being into very different styles of music. Everybody's influences are brought to the table and it shows through."

For the band's follow-up single, "From Yesterday," it wanted to do something epic. The guys wanted to do something that had never been done before and prove that they weren't a one-hit-wonder. Jared came up with the idea of filming an entire video in China, something an American rock band had never accomplished.

"Jared was just like, 'I want to shoot the new video in China,'" Wachter said. "I know a lot of people were just like, 'You're fucking crazy. That's never going to happen.' But we had some believers on our side, and Jared is a persistent guy and doesn't take no for an answer. Six months later, we were in China."

Jared directed an over 13 minute short film for the song, which was said to be inspired by the film "The Last Emperor." In the video, Jared and his band mates are given a "gift" by the young emperor, and are required to battle samurai-like fighters in the beautiful China landscape.

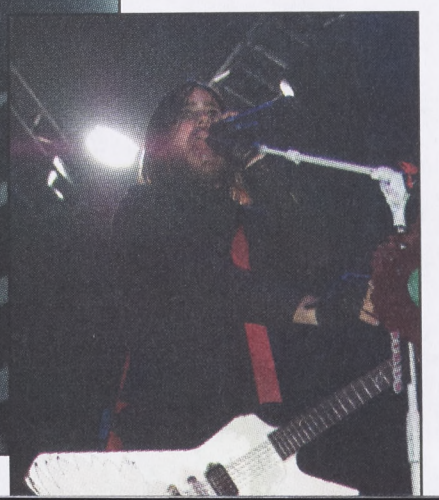
"The area where we shot the video was outside of Shanghai and I don't think a lot of those people have ever seen Westerners before," Wachter said. "At times you felt a little like aliens from another world, but it was just a really unforgettable experience. The people there were unbelievable, very hospitable and very welcoming."

While the buzz surrounding the band is still high, its future is unclear. In a recent interview with MTV.com, Jared said, "We're talking about the possibilities of another record or the possibility of calling it something else and saying goodbye. You have to look at your life and see if you have anything to say or to offer at that point."

And while Wachter seemed excited to talk to me about the band and its future touring plans to return to Japan, he left the band eight days after our conversation. The band's Web site said he "wanted to spend more time with his family." It was something that seemed to come as a shock to everybody but the other band members.

But for a band whose very name implicates the accelerated lifestyle of our society and suggests that an escape to the cosmos could only be a few seconds away, such unpredictable actions are fitting. There is no sense of security with 30 Seconds To Mars and that is exciting.

Photos by Matthew Wilkinson



Shortly after this article was written, bass player Matt Wachter (left) left the band.

COACHELLA:

Preparing Yourself for Paradise in the Desert

Story and Photos by Brandy Baker

It's April and for students that means Spring Break is over, classes are becoming more difficult to attend and the limbo of mid-semester is boring as hell. Yet for me, April means only one thing—Coachella.

The concert of all concerts, an oasis in the desert filled with music, sun, beautiful landscaping and thousands of other hot and sweaty concert-goers like me. I look forward to this concert every year and the anticipation feels like I will have a coronary before it ever gets here. All the fun that is Coachella requires extensive preparation and smart decision-making, both beforehand and during the concert. So what do you need to know to make the most of the year's biggest So. Cal. concert? Here's my list of tips and helpful hints.

Tickets:

One of the most important things to know is tickets and when they go on sale. Sign up for notifications at Coachella.com. The Web site will e-mail you when the dates and line-up are announced, when the tickets go on sale, and other related news.

Tickets for the 3-day concert are now sold out. Normally, tickets are either $85 for the single-day passes or $249 for the 3-day pass. Of course, tickets were available through Ticketmaster, but you had to get them early. Sign up for pre-sale notifications through Ticketmaster.com, as well as Goldenvoice.com who sponsors the concert in connection with DucatKing.com who sponsors indie artists. At this point your best bet is to hit up Web sites, Craigslist, eBay, Amazon and other ticketing agencies that sell at a profit.

Accommodations:

Take a lesson from my first Coachella experience and don't try to sleep in the backseat of your car in a shady motel parking lot. Trust me, it doesn't work. It's confined and cramped, the temperature fluctuates from cold at night to hot early in the morning, and you never know who might be watching you. It's just creepy. So either get a room somewhere or reserve a camping site on the venue grounds, which must be done in advance too.

Camping passes are $45 a day, per person, available through Coachella.com or Ticketmaster. You can camp from the night before the concert starts until the afternoon after it ends. The campgrounds have portable showers and toilets for campers. The only problem with camping is that you have to listen to the other campers partying around you late at night and you deal with the weather and temperatures all day. There's nothing like waking up at 6 a.m. in a pool of your own sweat because it's already 80 degrees outside.

Getting a room in a nearby city is the best and most comfortable solution. The city of Indio books fast so usually you'll wind up with a room in Palm Springs, Thousand Palms, Cathedral City, Palm Desert or Rancho Mirage. Book early so you get the best rate and closest room to the venue. That's why signing up for notification of the concert date announcement on Coachella.com is important so you know when to book.

If you choose to use a Web site to book, you can use Hotels.com or other any of the travel sites like Orbitz and Expedia, but I recommend using hotel-rates.com. I used this Web site last year and got a room for $35 in Palm Springs. This year I reserved a room at a resort and spa using the site for $175. At least it has a fridge, microwave, ironing board and iron, hair dryer and a free breakfast. That was the cheapest I could find in January because most rooms were around $250-$300 a night. Still, this Web site seems to always offer the lowest rates from my experience.

Food and Drinks:

Take a large cooler with you because the drive is about two hours from Long Beach and after 13 hours of listening to bands in the desert sun, you'll want something to eat and drink when you get back to your room. I did this last year and it really helped with having food and drinks with us because most of the fast-food restaurants were closed by the time we got back to our room. But there is always Denny's.

Be careful consuming alcohol before sunset. During the day, alcohol will only add to the dehydrating heat of the sun. Drink lots of water during the day and alcohol after the sun goes down. This will make sure you last through the day, without passing out.

Weather and Temperature:

Don't forget that you're going to be out in the desert sun with little shade. Make sure you wear light-colored clothing, a hat and use lots of sunscreen. You don't want to burn on day one of three. Also, the temperature fluctuates dramatically in the desert. It gets chilly and windy at night so you will need a long sleeve shirt to keep warm. You can also bring a small beach towel to wrap yourself in. Check the weather forecast before you go.

Communication:

I recommend purchasing a set of walkie-talkies for your group. This is a great way to stay in touch during the concert. Sometimes you get separated during bathroom or beer breaks or you may have to split up to see different bands. This will ensure you won't get lost and you can reunite with your pals. It will save your cell phone minutes and time making all those calls.

Spending:

Bring lots of cash. Using credit and the ATM machines take too much time at this event. The lines are long and you'll back things up, especially at this year's sold out Coachella. The food and beer tents only accept cash as payment.

Buy merchandise early. As much as it is a hassle to tote it around, the merchandise will sell out before the end of the day. If you see something you want, buy it. There is no guarantee that awesome shirt will be there eight hours later.

Music:

Once the lineup is announced, you should begin checking up on the bands playing. Check them out on iTunes or MySpace. Find out who they are, what they sound like, and if you want to see them, find out what day they play on. Make a preliminary lineup for each day. Find out who you want to see on that day, write them down in order of importance, then once the official lineup of scheduled times is released it will be easier to organize your day for maximum band viewing.

Traffic:

Leave early and arrive early. Traffic in and out of the Polo Fields is slow. So, give yourself plenty of time.

It also takes a while to get through the lines in and out of the concert. Don't push, be patient, and expect to wait. This year is sold out which means you'll be fighting tens of thousands of people.

Check out this Web site for tips on roads to avoid and take to cut down on the traffic: http://wehow.ehow.com/how_2021431_avoid-traffic-jams-coachella.html

The Bands

Headliners:

Friday – Bjork
Saturday – Red Hot Chili Peppers
Sunday – Rage Against the Machine

Other Bands:

Interpol, Placebo, The Decemberists, Peaches, The Arcade Fire, Air, Artic Monkeys, Silversun Pickups, Sonic Youth, LCD Soundsystem, The Lemonheads, Willie Nelson, Paul Van Dyke, Tiesto, Jesus and Mary Chain, Blonde Redhead, and many more.

DIG UNDERGROUND

Bert McCraken of The Used

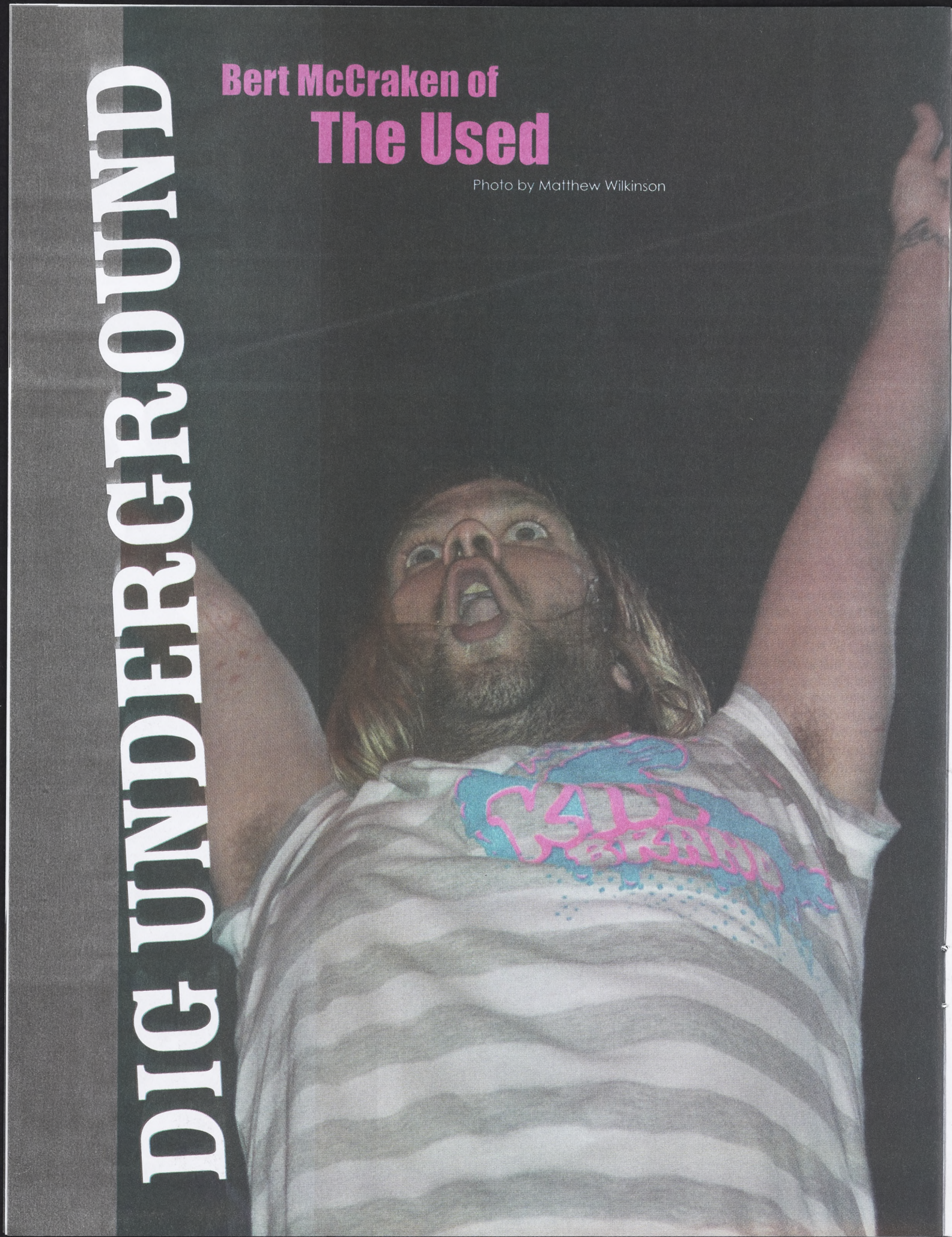
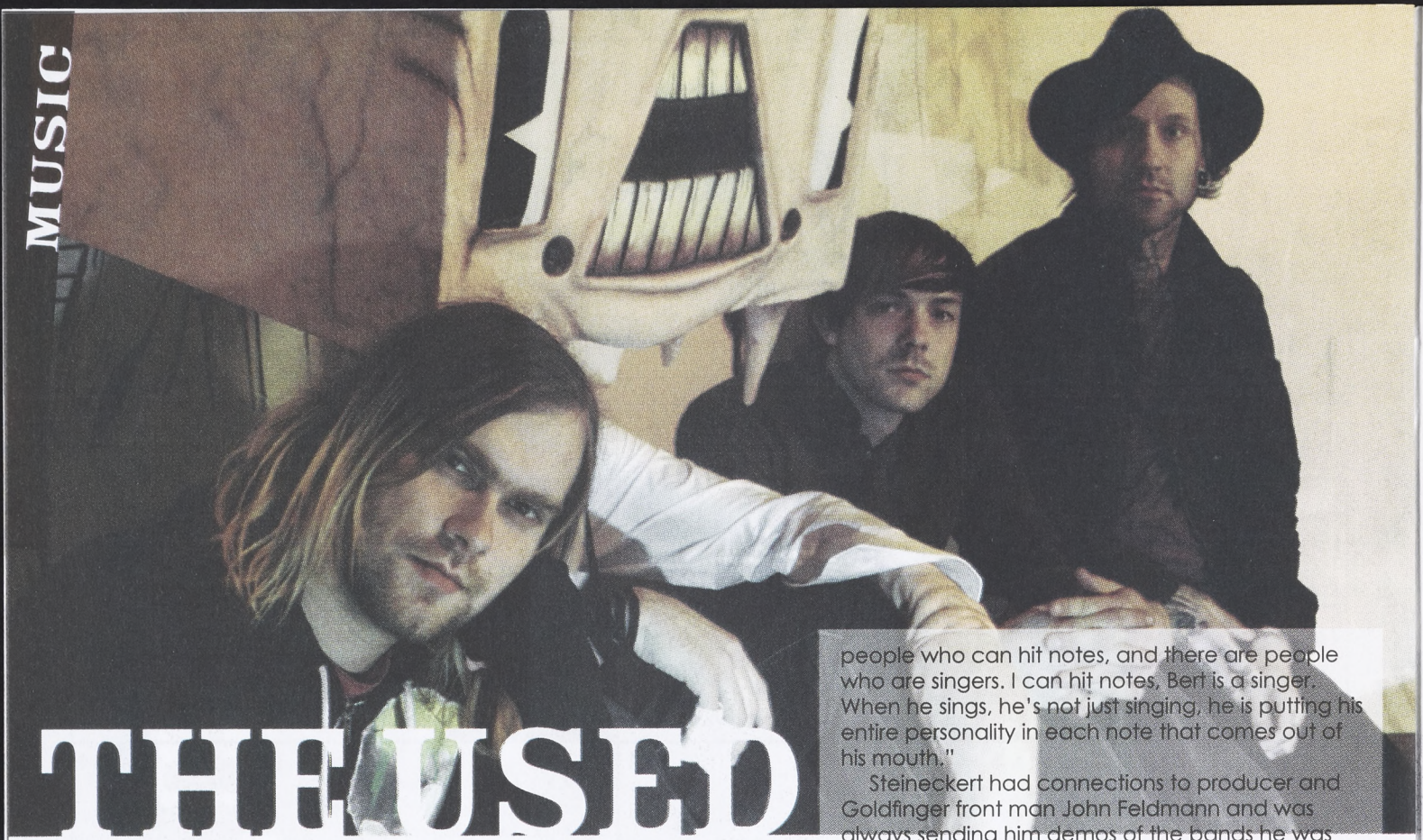


Photo by Matthew Wilkinson

APRIL

Your guide to concerts, movies, on campus events and local happenings

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 *Softball v. CS Northridge, 1 p.m.* Ratatat @ Glasshouse, 7 p.m.			**4** Brand New @ Avalon, 7:30 p.m. "Are We Done Yet?" "Firehouse Dog"		**6** *Women's Water Polo v. San Jose State, noon* Veruca Salt @ Roxy, 9 p.m. "Grindhouse" "The Reaping"	**7** *Women's Water Polo v. Stanford, noon*
8	**9**	**10** *Dirtbags v. Pepperdine, 6:30 p.m.* Muse @ Forum, 8 p.m.	**11**	**12** Say Anything & Saves The Day w/ The Almost @ HOB Sunset, 7 p.m.	**13** *Dirtbags v. CS Northridge, 6:30 p.m.* "Disturbia" "Vacancy" "The Aqua Teen Hunger Force Colon Movie Film"	**14** *Softball v. CS Fullerton 1 p.m.* Rocky Votolato @ Chain Reaction, 7:30 p.m.
15 Last to enjoy Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach	**16**	**17** *Dirtbags v. Loyola Marymount, 6:30 p.m.*	**18** *Women's Tennis v. UC Santa Barbara, 2 p.m.* Brett Bixby @ Troubadour, 8 p.m.	**19** AJ Degrasse @ Martini Blues, 8 p.m. Chris Paul Pverall @ Alex's Bar, 9 p.m.	**20** *Dirtbags v. UC Davis, 6:30 p.m.* "Hot Fuzz" "In the Land of Women" "The Nanny Diaries" "Rogue"	
22 Blood Brothers @ Glasshouse, 7 p.m. Men Women & Children @ Chain Reaction, 7:30 p.m.	**23** Iggy and the Stooges @ Wiltern, 7 p.m.	**24** *Dirtbags v. San Diego State, 6:30 p.m.*	**25** Blonde Redhead @ Glasshouse, 7 p.m. Lacuna Coil @ Wiltern, 7 p.m.		**27** Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival @ Empire Polo Fields, Indio, 11 a.m. - midnight (through April 29) "The Last Legion" "The Invisible" "Next"	**28**
29 Sleepless Me @ Viper Room, 10:30 p.m.	**30**	1	2	3		**5** Poison The Well @ Glasshouse, 7 p.m. Cypress Hill @ Vault 350, 7 p.m.



THE USED

Photo courtesy of Warner Brothers Records

By Matthew Wilkinson

It was pouring rain outside the Long Beach Arena when The Used bassist Jeph "Jepha" Howard and I sat down in the band's dressing room to talk. Howard was wolfing down a plate of pasta from catering and apologized in between bites for talking with his mouth full. The last time The Used played the Long Beach Arena, it broke the arena's attendance record by drawing in almost 14,000 fans.

Hundreds of fans were already enduring the rain when I got there, in hopes of getting a treasured spot on the barricade, for the Taste of Chaos arena tour the band was headlining. The Used have sold over three million records worldwide, yet when Howard opens his mouth to talk about his group, he still refers to them as just "four boys from Utah."

It's not often that such an in-your-face, wild-and-crazy, scream-til-you-puke rock band like The Used comes out of a conservative place like Utah County, Utah. In fact, The Used is the first to emerge out the state where a study, in 2004, showed that 62 percent of the population is Mormon.

"Half of my family I would say was Mormon," Howard said. "The other half was Catholic. I was neither. I didn't care. Religion and all that stuff to me, it's like, it had a good idea that went wrong. There are tons of rock bands in Utah, though. I think it's because it's pretty repressed. Of that much religious power comes that much of the opposite. It balances out."

All of the members of the band were around the religion. Original drummer and founding member Brendan Steineckert was raised in a Mormon family, guitarist Quinn Allman was raised in an anti-Mormon family and singer Bert McCracken was raised in a strict Mormon household until he was kicked out, at age 16, for not adhering to the beliefs of the religion. He was homeless when he auditioned for The Used.

"We knew Bert from some of the other bands he was in," Howard said. "The first time he sang and just laid stuff down to 'Maybe Memories,' we were like 'Wow.' Bert's voice is so different. There are people who can hit notes, and there are people who are singers. I can hit notes, Bert is a singer. When he sings, he's not just singing, he is putting his entire personality in each note that comes out of his mouth."

Steineckert had connections to producer and Goldfinger front man John Feldmann and was always sending him demos of the bands he was in. Feldmann had always dismissed his projects, but when he heard a rough demo of "A Box Full of Sharp Objects," he offered to fly the band out and record them in his studio.

"We thought he was kidding," Howard admitted. "We thought it was like a big joke and we would show up to his house and he was going to laugh at us. But no, he really did like it."

The band signed to Reprise Records, a subsidiary of Warner Brothers that is home to bands like Green Day and My Chemical Romance. Its self-titled album came out in 2002 and after touring stints supporting Goldfinger and a few years on the Vans Warped Tour, the album sold over half a million copies and was certified gold.

It was also on the Warped Tour that the band made a fan out of tour innovator Kevin Lyman. After The Used released its second studio album "In Love and Death" in late 2004, Lyman came to the band with the idea of making a winter counterpart to the Warped Tour. He wanted to call it Taste of Chaos and The Used to headline the inaugural year.

The band agreed to far less pay than it was used to so Lyman could book a strong tour. My Chemical Romance and Killswitch Engage were booked to support. The tour took off and is now an annual tour with an international component.

A few months after the tour ended, The Used dropped off the music scene. The band members took some time off to rest and recuperate from the years of touring. In September of 2006, the band announced it was separating ways with Steineckert. Dan Whitsides was chosen as a replacement.

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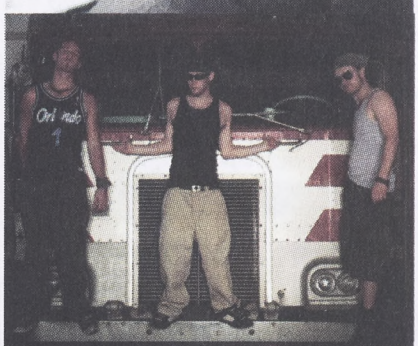
Scene & Heard *around campus*

Cal State Long Beach prides itself on diversity and the same can be said for its music scene. This month we've featured five incredibly incandescent talents that you need to check out. (Who knows, you may be sitting next to some of them in class)



By Whitney Walker

Photos courtesy of Brook Lee Catastrophe, Marc Beauregard, Zen Robbi and John-a-Dreams

Me and my guitar...

Anyone who has had jam sessions with Matt Costa in their living room has to be somewhat decent, right? Well journalism major Marc Beauregard is far beyond that.

He provides mellow, feel-good tunes that any So Cal college student can relate to and appreciate.

This surf stud has been belting out original songs since he was 12 years old.

"Musical instruments were always available at a very young age. Naturally, I picked them up and played them frequently," Beauregard said.

What exactly inspires someone to devote so much effort at such a young age?

"Music was passed to me by my grandfather and father," he said. "It was either live jams that we would create for hours on end, or Neil Young, Bob Dylan, James Taylor, Cream, or Tom Petty filling the air. I cannot remember a family get-together without a jam session. There were always guitars and things lying around."

Marc Bee (a.k.a. Marc Beauregard) is currently lined up with a few fellow musicians to expand on his acoustic-surf jam band.

"Each member represents an intricate facet of the music-making process," he said.

Chris VonWilpert leads on guitar, while Drew Martin rocks the drums. The band adds a little flair with DJ F-Street's turntable skills and these talents mixed with Beauregard's vocals and rhythm guitar will most definitely blow you away.

Singing in the shower...

We all know how hard it is to come by originality these days, especially in music. Just when you think you've heard it all, CSULB's own John-a-Dreams brings about a refreshing yet indescribable medium between funk and jazz.

The four-piece rock band has been grooving together since October 2004. Just one year later, they conquered CSULB Battle of the Bands and won first place. Since then, the boys of John-a-Dreams have been finishing up their degrees, playing local shows and recording its first full length album.

"Aware Away" contains 10 awesome songs, all of which were recorded in an Anaheim studio this past year. According to the guys, "It sounds better than The Beatles!" (I sense sarcasm, but you get the idea).

For more information and all your John-a-Dreams needs, visit their site john-a-dreams.com.

Everybody's asking...

The Brook Lee Catastrophe exudes pure poetry "with one foot in the '60s, and the other in the experimental."

OC Weekly describes the band's sound as "wordy tunes of love and life and truth and death and being naked at all the wrong moments...45-minutes of music as inspiration."

Long Beach Magazine raves of "a storyteller atmosphere with a backdrop of music reminiscent of Van Morrison and Wilco."

This classic folk-rock band, led by So Cal singer-songwriter Brook Lee, has been together for two years with the collaborative efforts of violinist Paul Mitchell, guitarist George Madrid, bassist Ryan Nakata and drummer Mike Duncan.

Having two full-length albums already out in under one year, Brook and the boys have built up a strong and sensitive fan base.

With shows lined up all along the west coast, as far reaching as Oregon and Nevada, the band has a beyond busy schedule of balancing tours, school and "real" jobs.

For music and lyrics you can truly connect to, visit thebrookleecatastrophe.com for upcoming events that you surely shouldn't miss out on.

Huff N' Puff N' Stuff...

Zen Robbi have been compared to the likes of Sublime, Bob Marley, The Doors and Jimmy Hendrix. With just that how could you not want to check them out?

Zen Robbi's catchy sound is the offspring of Mic Dangerously's vocals and guitar skills, Scotty Hollywood's mad drum beats, and Tim E. Too Tall's incendiary bass lines.

It's hard to pinpoint its music to just one genre. The songs range from funk, rock, blues, jazz and reggae.

The band started in 2001, "with aspirations of world domination," Zen Robbi said. "After we did that, we realized that the reality of the corporate rock world sucked."

As true as that may be, Zen Robbi continues to grow after signing to indie label, Red Pecker Records.

There's reason behind the energetic audiences this band pulls in. Whether it's just down the street at DiPiazza, or taking a party bus up to the legendary Roxy in Hollywood, these three know how to pump up a crowd. With local favorites like "Sex Sea" and "Love to Learn the Hard Way," this talented trio has built up a loyal fan base.

Practice Makes Perfect

By Jana Owens

After having attended Long Beach State for nearly four years now, it is easy to view the campus as a type of social map.

Wander toward the Nugget and you'll find the Greeks hanging around the outside tables. Go even further up campus and watch the art students painting their latest masterpiece or the drama majors rehearsing their newest lines. Down in the SSPA you can find all of us aspiring journalists searching for breaking news stories. Back in a corner on lower campus, you'll find business students making plans to take over corporate America one business at a time. Walk through the sports fields and watch the athletes during one of their countless hours of grueling practice. On the very northern tip of campus, dance students are stretching before class preparing for their next performance. Squeezed just between the sound of coaches yelling out practice drills and dancers perfecting their pirouettes sits Long Beach State's music department.

Wander onto this section of campus and you'll be welcomed by the sounds of every type of instrument imaginable. Add to this choral practice and you have a surprisingly comforting combination of music.

Just as a math major studies endlessly for calculus exams and an engineering major spends more time in labs than actual classes, music majors spend countless hours studying music charts. It does not matter what his or her musical forte is, each and every music student is as dedicated as the next. Granted, to be a music student you have no choice but to be dedicated.

After going through a required audition process to make it into the music department on campus, Long Beach State's music students are given what most would consider an unbearable load. Aside from the typical general education requirements that all college students face, those involved in the department program spend endless hours practicing, performing and practicing even more. According to Roberto Ortiz, sophomore tuba player, a music student spends an average of four to five hours practicing his or her instrument every day. Keep in mind that this four to five hours does not include required practice time they commit to through the music department. Whether it is orchestra practice, jazz practice, ensemble practice or simply practice on their own time, they definitely have it ingrained in their head that practice really does makes perfect. On top of this, they go to private lessons every week and have anywhere between 5-10 performances each semester.

Because music students are so dedicated to their instrument of choice, all of the practice leaves little time in their schedules for actual general education courses. Plus, many music classes are only one unit apiece. This means that the average music student takes anywhere between 18-21 units each semester. This also means that nearly every summer and winter session will be utilized to its fullest potential in order to get as many units finished as possible. Even after all of this, they still spend longer than most getting a degree.

When asked what the best part of being a music student is, Roberto didn't miss a beat before responding.

"You're doing what you love and you're surrounded by people who love what they're doing as well," he said. "It makes the whole experience so much better."

Granted, Roberto's weekly schedule is not one for the faint of heart. Being a music student sounds tough because it is tough. However, just like any college student, music students know how important it is to leave time for fun. Lifelong friendships are made amongst the sounds of trombones and clarinets. Plus, according to Roberto, they can party just as hard as they practice, and given all the practicing they do, that's definitely saying something!

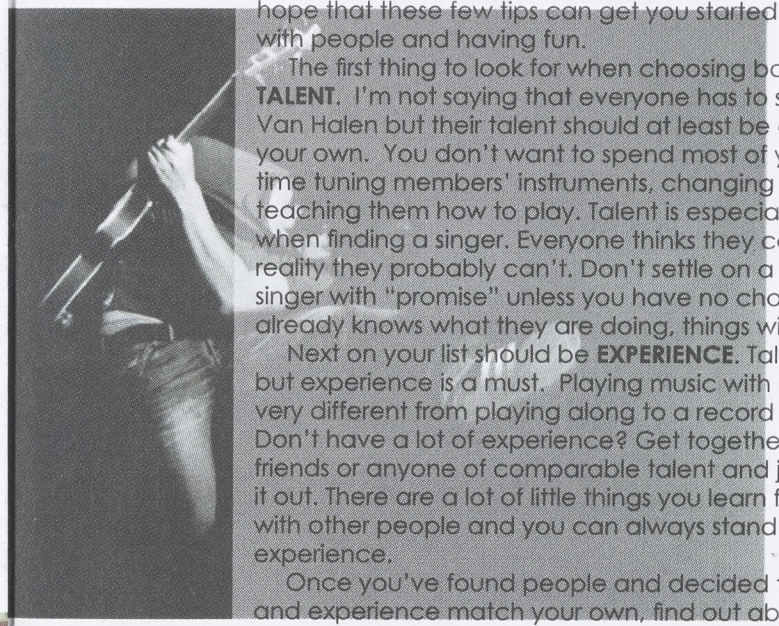
Photo by Brigid McGuire

STARTING A BAND

By Sam Robertson

So, you've been wailing in your bedroom for months and now you think the public is finally ready for your rebuttal to the dismal wasteland that is mainstream music. It's time to start a band.

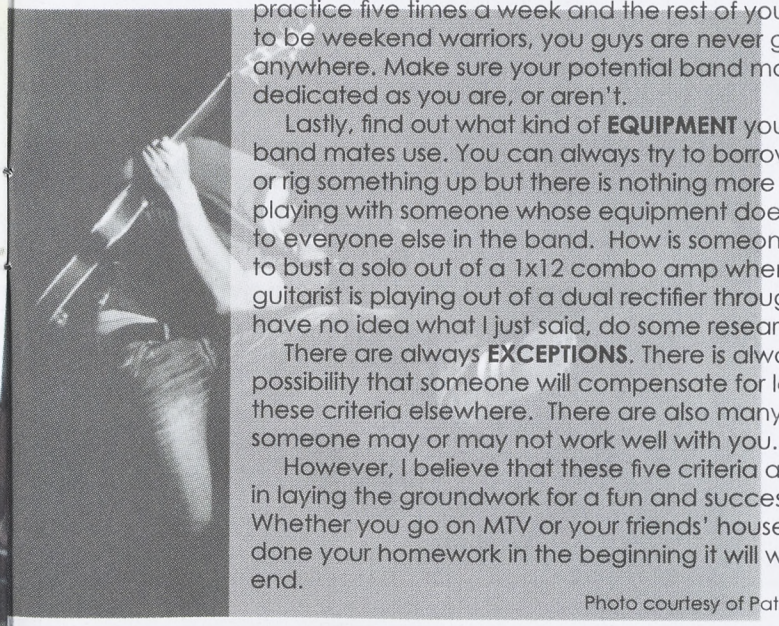
Throughout the years that I have been playing in bands, helping put together shows and working at clubs, I have seen my share of bands that turned into household names and those that broke up on stage after just a couple months. I hope that these few tips can get you started playing music with people and having fun.



The first thing to look for when choosing band members is **TALENT**. I'm not saying that everyone has to shred like Eddie Van Halen but their talent should at least be comparable to your own. You don't want to spend most of your practice time tuning members' instruments, changing strings or teaching them how to play. Talent is especially important when finding a singer. Everyone thinks they can sing. In reality they probably can't. Don't settle on a mediocre singer with "promise" unless you have no choice. If everyone already knows what they are doing, things will go a lot faster.

Next on your list should be **EXPERIENCE**. Talent is important but experience is a must. Playing music with other people is very different from playing along to a record in your room. Don't have a lot of experience? Get together with some friends or anyone of comparable talent and just jam. Figure it out. There are a lot of little things you learn from playing with other people and you can always stand to gain more experience.

Once you've found people and decided their talent and experience match your own, find out about their **COMMITMENT**. You have to be on the same page about how much you want to put into your band. If you want to practice five times a week and the rest of your band wants to be weekend warriors, you guys are never going to get anywhere. Make sure your potential band mates are as dedicated as you are, or aren't.



Lastly, find out what kind of **EQUIPMENT** your potential band mates use. You can always try to borrow equipment or rig something up but there is nothing more frustrating than playing with someone whose equipment doesn't match up to everyone else in the band. How is someone expected to bust a solo out of a 1x12 combo amp when the rhythm guitarist is playing out of a dual rectifier through a 4x12? If you have no idea what I just said, do some research.

There are always **EXCEPTIONS**. There is always the possibility that someone will compensate for lacking in one of these criteria elsewhere. There are also many other reasons someone may or may not work well with you.

However, I believe that these five criteria are fundamental in laying the groundwork for a fun and successful band. Whether you go on MTV or your friends' house party, if you've done your homework in the beginning it will work out in the end.

Photo courtesy of Patrick Photography

Give 'Em The Boot!

Okay, so you've started your band and for whatever reasons someone just isn't meshing with everyone else. Their style is clashing and they've got to go. Here are a few ways that you can give them the boot. I'm not saying these are the nicest ways to go about it but they are some of the more interesting ones that I have seen happen to people I know.

The Text Message – This works well in a situation where you don't really have much communication with the person to begin with. Just shoot them a text that says something along the lines of, "You're out, lol." They'll get the point.

Drop it like it's hot – Sometimes it won't be until you are on tour that you decide someone isn't the right fit for your band. That's cool. Just wait 'til you're somewhere like a gas station and when said member goes to the bathroom leave all their stuff on the curb and take off. You might want to leave an explanation note and some cash for a ride home, or not.

The Last Song – If you really want to catch your soon to be ex band mate off guard this will definitely do the trick. Go ahead and find a new band member and practice a couple times without your current members knowledge. Then at your next show after the last song say, "Hey, we want to play one more song with our newest member." Thank your old member and don't look back.

Good luck!

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"Branden is a good person and we love him," Howard said. "You could tell things were getting a little weird and we were kind of separating. We just decided to set it free. Branden is in his favorite band in the entire world [Rancid], and we have our friend Dan, who has been a friend of [ours] for years. We're both happier."

It was also around this time that talk of the new album started to surface. The band had been writing for awhile now, and everybody was anxious to hear some new material.

"Lies for the Liars" is due out on May 8. In celebration, the band returned to the headlining slot of Taste of Chaos.

"We love these songs so much, we can't stop playing them," Howard said. "The album is awesome. It's the best thing we have ever done. We all feel the same way. And we don't mean [to be] cocky, we mean that very confident. Jamming these songs is so much easier. It's much more us than anything we've ever done."

Songs like "Liar, Liar," "Pretty Handsome Awkward" and "Hospital" are angst-filled anthems filled with wailing guitars and crashing drums. The vocals are the normal McCracken trademark that has elevated the band out of the trenches of the Warped Tour scene. Most bands have a designated singer and a designated screamer, McCracken does both. He has earned a reputation for screaming so hard that he actually vomits on stage.

"We don't tell him when to sing and when to scream," Howard said. "Bert sings the way he sings because he sings like that. When we started this band and first did 'Maybe Memories,' Bert was singing and when it got to this point he started screaming because that's how it felt to him. It's not like we are putting screaming into a song to make it cool. It's about what the song needs and what Bert feels that he should put into the song."

Time has an effect on everybody though, and even Howard admits that McCracken has lost some range over time. McCracken works hard to find new ranges and not to overstrain his voice as the band's sound continues to transgress. "Lies for the Liars" promises something exciting for both old and new fans.

"Say you were completely blind and had never seen anything," Howard said. "And I say 'This apple that I am looking at right now is the most red apple I have ever seen. I can't even look at it, it is so brightly red.' You will have no idea what I am talking about unless you can see it for that second. That's how we felt about this record. It's that apple to us."

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